Kilkenny LEADER Partnership

LAG Composition Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP) was formed in 2008 as a community-led, owned and driven local development organisation. KLP's origins reach back to the 1991 pilot LEADER programme for the county. It is directed by a community-led, voluntary Board of Directors from community and voluntary groups, social partners, local government and state bodies. Through its foundation companies, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP) has 25 years' experience delivering LEADER and other programmes to communities on the ground, providing a wide range of local development services and supports, including financial aid, technical assistance, animation, training, work placements, advice and referrals.

The KLP LAG comprises the Company Members siting on the Board of Directors. KLP's Board meets monthly or approximately 11 times per year. KLP's Board of Directors provides a balanced representation from the various sectors of rural development, community, state agency, business, elected representatives and social partners. It includes representatives with direct experience or representation of key sectors such as rural tourism, energy conservation/development, environmental protection, and small to medium business.

KLP currently has, as a legacy of the government funding requirements which existed up to mid-2015, a Board of Directors of 24 persons, which were also the only Members: i.e. the same individuals comprising members and directors. At KLP's 29th January 2016 Extraordinary General Meeting the existing Members and Directors adopted a new constitution for the company. The new constitution permits 'unlimited membership' of the company. Membership is open to all properly constituted community groups and operational small businesses and over 240 such applicants are now Members with nomination/ voting rights to the Board of Directors. From the 2017 AGM the KLP Community Group & Small Business Members will directly elect four of the six community directors and one small business representative on a three-year rotational basis.

The LAG area The geographic area of the Local Development Strategy proposed by KLP is the entire sub-regional area covered by County Kilkenny, including Kilkenny City, with a population of 95,419. Kilkenny covers a total geographic extent of 2,072 km2 and a land area of 2,061 km2.

While County Kilkenny is the focus of the LDS, KLP is mindful of the lessons of CEDRA (2014) that highlighted how the new Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) often cross local authority administrative boundaries and their importance in optimising rural development actions (Box 2.1 and Figure 2.3). Therefore KLP's LDS will seek to initiate 'Cooperation theme' projects with partner LAGs that traverse such boundaries.

Total available funding €5,843,679

The Key Local Objectives of the LDS

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION
Tourism *High-level Objective 1 – Rural Tourism: Support Sustainable Bottom-up Development to optimise an Integrated Range of Tourism Offerings throughout County Kilkenny.*
1.1 Optimise the environmentally sustainable tourism potential of Kilkenny's waterways and river heritage assets.
1.2 Optimise the sustainable tourism potential of Kilkenny's greenways, blueways, cultural and built heritage assets.
1.3 To encourage and support local community, area-based initiatives for networking and cooperating with neighbouring regions.

Enterprise   *High-level Objective 2 – Enterprise Development: Support Sustainable Development of an Innovative and Public-Private Rural Enterprise Culture to optimise Job Creation, Wealth Generation and Climate Change Mediation Opportunities in County Kilkenny.*

2.1   To invest in the Creative Enterprise Sectors.

2.2   To encourage and support young people aged 18-35 years and recently unemployed people to realise their entrepreneurial potential.

2.3   Encourage the development of social enterprises to enhance local service provision.

2.4   To diversify, strengthen and expand the Food and Drink Sector (especially artisanal) in Kilkenny.

Rural Towns   *High-level Objective 3 – Rural Towns: Lead and resource Integrated Bottom-up Development Strategies to support Rural Towns become Development Hubs within their Hinterlands.*

3.1   To lead and resource a range of integrated bottom-up development strategies that identify local strengths to support rural towns to become development hubs in their hinterlands.

Broadband   *High-level Objective 4 – Broadband: Support the Access of Rural Communities and Businesses to Future-proofed, Reliable, High-speed and Low-cost Broadband Infrastructure and related Services.*

4.1   To support the access of residents to high-level broadband training and of rural communities and businesses to future-proofed reliable high-speed and low-cost broadband.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Basic Services   *High-level Objective 5 – Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities: Support Bottom-up Community Approaches and Social Enterprises to bridge Service Gaps and provide Employment.*

5.1   To support bottom-up, community-based and integrated approaches to bridge service gaps and provide employment opportunities.

Youth   *High-level Objective 6 – Rural Youth: Develop Innovative Youth-focused Socio-cultural Facilities and assist Integration of Youth Activities and Interests into the Wider Community Development Agenda.*

6.1   To develop innovative youth-focused social and cultural facilities, to assist the integration of youth activities and interests into the wider community agenda.

RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Water Resources   *High-level Objective 7 – Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources: Increase awareness among Rural Communities of the Opportunities from and Threats to their Local Water Resources and pilot Best-practice Improvement on selected Waterways.*

7.1   To protect water resources by raising public understanding of their importance and to optimise the rural development potential of Kilkenny's waterways.

Biodiversity   *High-level Objective 8 – Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity: Increase awareness of Biodiversity among Rural Communities and complete Integrated Area-based Pilot Actions promoting Conservation and related Mediation Actions.*

8.1   To raise awareness among rural communities of the principles of the ecosystem approach for the conservation of biodiversity.

Renewable Energy   *High-level Objective 9 – Renewable Energy: Increase adoption of Innovative Renewable Energy Strategies and Technologies among Rural Communities and Businesses which address National Climate Change goals.*

9.1   To support the development of high potential renewable energy resources and technologies in Kilkenny and increase adoption of those innovations among rural communities and businesses.

Summary of strategic actions and anticipated outputs/targets

Barrow Valley Development Programme will establish the Kilkenny section of the River Barrow Valley as part of a new tourism brand proposition in the east of Ireland by funding 1 x animation, 5 x capital, 4 x marketing and 3 x training initiatives to animate and train communities and tourism service providers, improve tourism infrastructure and promote the area and its offerings, with a focus on activity/adventure and culture/heritage tourism.

River and Activity-focused Community Tourism will support sustainable community-led tourism developments that increase river tourism offerings in two riverside communities through 2 x activity/adventure tourism, 2 x eco-tourism, 2 x water-based tourism capital projects, 1 x network of tourism providers and 1 x marketing initiative.

River-based Culture and Heritage Tourism Initiative is a pilot project in the Linguan River Valley to develop a low-cost culture and heritage tourism initiative by supporting 2 x animation projects, 1 x training initiative and 4 x capital projects.

Develop Kilkenny sections of Dublin to Dungarvan Greenway-Blueway long-distance trail to (i) continue to develop planned South Kilkenny Greenway, (ii) connect it to Barrow Blueway and (iii) promote a new regional destination for activity/adventure and culture/ heritage tourism through 1 x animation project, 1 x training programme, 1 x marketing initiative and 1 x network of tourism service providers.

Local Heritage & 'Ireland's Ancient East' Competitive Call will facilitate 1 x animation project and deliver 1 x training programme comprising culture/heritage tourism development principles, charter and framework to 10 x communities and fund 4 x culture and heritage tourism initiatives (a mix of capital, training, marketing and animation projects) to address sustainability/interpretation challenges posed by community use of heritage sites.

Townlands Heritage Tourism Initiative will facilitate six parishes to conserve local townlands knowledge as an asset for culture/heritage tourism through 4 x animation and 4 x training initiatives, 4 x related capital projects and 1 x network of parishes.

Trail Kilkenny Linkages & Integration will further develop Trail Kilkenny to include 2 x new activity/adventure tourism initiatives and 2 x new culture and heritage tourism initiatives plus 1 x new trail development and marketing strategy.

Development of Existing Tourism Operators & Sector will be progressed through 1 x animation and training initiative to upskill tourism operators, with six existing tourism enterprises in the micro and small business sector in 2 x REDZ supported to develop and expand their operations comprising 2 x activity/adventure tourism initiatives, 2 x rural recreation initiatives, 2 x agri-tourism initiatives.

Kilkenny's Tourism Networks will advance the work of Kilkenny Tourism and other local tourism networks by (i) hosting 2 x tourism business networking events to attract new members and encourage cooperation, (ii) running 1 x area-based tourism training programme to upskill Kilkenny Tourism and other network members on promoting the county as a destination and (iii) funding 1 x new marketing plan to integrate community tourism and smaller rural tourism operations from outdoor and 'soft adventure' sectors.

Tourism Operators Network will create and deliver 1 x training, 1 x animation and 1 x marketing project to encourage 'co-opetition' (cooperative competition) among all tourism operators in Kilkenny and its cross-county REDZ territories and realise marketing benefits.

Kilkenny City Bikes Scheme will entail 1 x animation project to agree a development pathway for this activity/adventure and rural recreation initiative.

Design and Crafts Destination Area will establish a new, distinct in the county and a creative cluster with 1 x animation project, 1 x training programme, supports for 2 x existing and 2 x new craft enterprises.

Craft Enterprise Scaling-up Development Pathway will support four high-potential crafts people / creative entrepreneurs to increase employment in Kilkenny through 1 x animation initiative followed by the capital, marketing and training projects required to scale-up 2 x existing and 2 x new enterprises.

Innovative Creative Enterprises will support 2 x existing and 3 x new creative enterprises with employment and wealth generation potential to create jobs, particularly in animation, multi-media and related sectors, with aid for animation/capital/training/marketing.

Young Entrepreneur Programme will develop an integrated programme of supports for young people to become self-employed through 2 x animation, 1 x training and 4 x capital projects.

Recently Unemployed Emerging Entrepreneurs will invest in recently unemployed aspiring entrepreneurs to develop their own businesses and become self-employed through 1 x animation, 1 x training and 4 x capital projects.

Community Retail and Basic Services entails 4 x animation and training initiatives leading to 4 x capital projects to create community retail centres in under-served areas, and to set-up 1 x Community Shop Network (animation) and devise 1 x marketing plan.

Social Services and Innovative Initiatives will lead 2 x animation and training initiatives leading to 5 x capital projects to establish community-based social enterprises that address service gaps in under-served areas, with an initial target of 2 x enterprises.

Food Strategy Review will review and update Kilkenny's existing food strategy 'Growing a Local Food Economy' from the outputs of 4 x animation projects.

New Food & Drink Enterprises will invest in new food and drink businesses in Kilkenny to build critical mass in the sub-region through 2 x animation projects and 1 x marketing project. [Six capital projects will be primed for grant aid under the Food Programme].

Co-operative Food and Drink Measures will progress Irish Food Co-op, a local model of logistical collaboration for artisan food businesses, through 1 x animation, 1 x training and 1 x marketing initiative.

'Field to Fork' Farm Family Enterprise Development Programme will support diversification into added-value food products through 2 x training initiatives, 1 x animation project and 4 x capital projects.

Strategic Food and Beverage Promotional Festivals and Events will enhance the number and impact of food and beverage promotional festivals/events in Kilkenny through 1 x animation, 1 x training project and 2 x food and beverage-themed festivals and events.

'Turn to the River' Development Programme will facilitate riverside communities to restore and enhance local waterways as development assets through 6 x animation/training and 5 x capital projects.

REDZ & Polycentrism Cooperation Module will support sustainable territorial development by funding 6 x community-based education and planning modules using the REDZ approach, establishing 6 x high-level animation/planning networks to deliver 6 x local maintenance/restoration/upgrading plans.

Town 'Speciality Brand' Development will support the adoption of specific rural development specialisations/functions in bigger towns through a competition process to select four towns with 1 x feasibility/animation project and 1 x training/mentoring programme.

'Town of Energy' Audit and Carbon Reduction Plan will support the development and promotion of energy reduction plans in five Kilkenny settlements through 5 x animation and awareness-building initiatives, 5 x training programmes and 1 x marketing initiative.

Living Town Initiative will support bottom-up, community-led town centre renewal in five Kilkenny towns through 5 x animation projects, 5 x training projects, 4 x capital projects and 3 x marketing initiatives.

Broadband-enabled Training Facility will fund 2 x small-scale capital (equipment) projects (selected through a time-limited call) to develop one facility as a training centre with high-speed broadband and 3 x training projects in high-level ICT skills.

Broadband Innovation Fund will support 3 x information (R&D) projects and 3 x small-scale capital projects leading to next-generation technology innovations and applications and test the outputs in a rural community through 1 x capacity building (animation) project.

Rural Transport Animator & Facilitator will assist the integration of the flexible community-based RTP operations of Ring-a-Link with public and private 'fixed corridor' transport services plus taxis, bicycles and other transport modes operating in Kilkenny, and 1 x marketing initative will promote the new and improved integrated rural transport services.

Employability Skills and Technical Training Programme to support long-term unemployed and NEETs into jobs in high-potential sectors through a new programme of capacity building, training in applied technical skills, and internships and work placements comprising 1 x network, 1 x marketing strategy, 7 x animation and 7 x training projects.

Community Facilities will invest in 5 x capital projects and initiatives to build/upgrade community recreational/physical amenities, 5 x training initiatives to enhance community capacity to manage them and 1 x marketing initiative to promote the facilities.

Social Farming will establish 1 x network of interested farms and care/health services personnel, deliver 1 x training programme and implement 4 x farm-based pilot projects for a social farming initiative that delivers new services in health, education and personal support.

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Cultural & Social Development Programme for Rural Youth is a youth development programme to examine young peoples' issues through the prism of cultural and social development, to improve individual outcomes and youth civic participation across society through 2 x training and 2 x animation initiatives.

Youth-focused Community Facilities will fund 3 x capital projects to provide facilities or space within existing community infrastructure, prioritising areas with poor or no youth amenties.

Youth-at-Risk Animator will deliver 5 x animation projects, 2 x training initiatives, and establish 1 x network of community, justice, social and youth support service providers to ensure joined-up delivery of services for hard-to-reach young people.

Community Water Resource Education Awareness Programme will improve Kilkenny communities' knowledge of the subject through 1 x training initiative and 2 x animation projects to help them apply the learnings to address the challenges (pollution, climate change) and grasp the opportunities (healthy communities, biodiversity) represented by their local water resources, culminating in 1 x network of water resource community groups.

Community-led Water Course Improvement will improve the water quality of water courses by funding 2 x capital projects.

Water Resource Training Programme for Landowners will entail 2 x short training courses for groups of landowners along Kilkenny's waterways to improve water course management practices and 3 x animation projects to explore the potential and develop an EU LIFE application to support innovative sustainable land management practices that enhance water quality and riparian biodiversity

Community Biodiversity Awareness Raising Project will develop and deliver 2 x community-focused training courses on the principles of biological conservation and 1 x animation project on applying practices in everyday lives and group decision-making.

Community Biodiversity Pilot Action Projects will fund 3 x community-led capital projects that aim to protect and improve local biodiversity.

Wood-fuel Value Chains Development will grow KLP's Vulcan Project, a value supply chain for forest growers, by increasing participants and developing production, added-value, and market reach through 1 x animation/training programme and 2 x capital projects.

Water Mill Hydro-power Project will develop a best-practice model of hydro-power generation in a community-owned mill site (for application in other community/private sites) through 1 x animation project and pilot the model through 1 x capital project.